




Clayton County Police Department

PROCEDURES

Subject PEER SUPPORT TEAM		Procedure # E10	
Authorizing Signature 	Effective 03-05-2024	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Rescinds	Total Pages 8

I. PURPOSE

Trained and experienced employees of the Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) constitute one of its most valuable resources. The Department recognizes that situations will be encountered that require action, which will result in varying degrees of emotional and psychological stress. The purpose of this policy is to make available a *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program* to minimize the effects caused by critical incidents and to assist employees in coping effectively with reactions to these incidents, and to establish departmental responsibilities, practices and procedures for the *CISM Program*.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Clayton County Police Department (CCPD) to provide employees assistance following involvement in any traumatic or critical incident.

III. DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident: Any incident, action or event which has the potential for producing significant emotional trauma that may adversely affect the psychological well-being of personnel. A critical incident may include, but is not limited to line of duty death, serious line of duty injury or assault, suicide, officer-involved shootings, multi-casualty incidents or disasters, significant events involving children, and incidents involving a known victim.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM): A collection of recognized psychological techniques used by both trained personnel (peers) and professionals to provide care for personnel exposed to potential or actual traumatic incidents. It emphasizes both individual and facilitated small group discussion among impacted persons and caregivers.

Critical Incident Support (CIS): An adjunct to professional medical, psychological, spiritual and other referral services. It does not replace the counseling and mental health benefits provided by EAP

resources or by employees' health plans. CIS does not provide substance abuse or psychological counseling. It does provide first responder support to those who have experienced a critical incident.

Mental Health Professionals (MHPs): Employed, contract and volunteer mental health professionals who have demonstrated experience in police counseling and debriefing, and who are licensed to practice in the State of Georgia or by a similar licensing authority. A preference is expressed for those who are associated with and support the philosophy and practice of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF).

Peer Support (PS): Available to all CCPD personnel and their immediate families after a critical incident. With appropriate approvals, these services may be offered to the members of other Georgia law enforcement organizations. The techniques are recommended for all persons exposed to traumatic situations. Candidates for support may include witnesses, victims, employees and others.

Peer Support Team (PST): A group of employees who have volunteered to participate in the CISM Program and are trained and certified in critical incident stress management techniques. They would be detached to assist fellow employees, their families and other law enforcement personnel in the aftermath of critical incidents. The success of this program is predicated on the fact that law enforcement personnel may initially be more inclined to seek the counsel of fellow officers.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Staffing

The *Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program* is coordinated by the CIS Administrator and consists of the following participants:

1. Peer Support Team (PST) Selection Committee: The PST Selection Committee consists of the PS Administrator, the PST Coordinator and four (4) PST Assistant Coordinators. PST Assistant Coordinators are recommended by the PS Administrator and approved by the PST Coordinator, their chain of command and by the Chief of Police.
2. Peer Support Team (PST): PST Members are employees selected by the Chief of Police, upon the recommendation of the PST Selection Committee and who have been trained in peer support by a trainer licensed by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF).

B. Program Procedures

1. It is the duty and responsibility of every employee to be alert to the need for a colleague to be referred to the program so that timely peer support and/or professional assistance may be offered.
2. In the event of a critical incident involving CCPD personnel, the PST Coordinator or an Assistant Coordinator will determine the nature of the initial response and the nature of an additional or ongoing response based on the best available estimate of the situation. Unless it is clearly unnecessary, face to face contact between a PST Member and a potentially impacted employee will be the preferred means of first response. PST Coordinators will coordinate with appropriate members of the chain of command.
3. Supervisors who are notified of or become aware of a need should begin the peer support process by notifying their Captain during or as soon as possible after a critical incident. The Captain should arrange for a PST response by contacting any one of the Team Coordinators, while impacted personnel are on duty or minimally within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident. Note: It is best to conduct the initial meeting with an impacted person

within twenty-four (24) hours and no later than seventy-two (72) hours following the incident for maximum benefit.

4. Any employee who identifies a critical incident may initiate a response by contacting their supervisor. The supervisor should contact their Captain, and the Captain will contact a PST Coordinator to assist in evaluating the need for peer support and/or professional support.
5. PST Members involved in a critical incident shall not be utilized to provide peer support for that incident.
6. PST Coordinators shall utilize the call-out roster, when practical, to summon PST Members determined to be the best suited to respond to the incident.
7. The following critical incidents are examples of incidents in which a PST response can be requested:
 - a. Officer-involved shooting (OIS) that results in death or serious injury to anyone;
 - b. Officer-involved vehicular pursuit/crash that results in death or serious injury to anyone;
 - c. Any other officer-involved incident that results in death or serious injury to anyone;
 - d. Traumatic death of an employee;
 - e. Critical incidents involving children;
 - f. Accidental discharge of a firearm with serious injury;
 - g. Any other incident where employees witness or are involved in a traumatic event; and
 - h. Incidents involving:
 - 1) Unusually large numbers of victims;
 - 2) Victims who are familiar to or have a special relationship with involved employees;
 - 3) Prolonged, stressful involvement of employees; and
 - 4) Special or unusual media attention.
8. Critical incidents can have a cumulative effect over several years. Therefore, the on-scene commander responsible for supervising an incident such as those described above shall advise the PS Administrator, through channels of the potentially stressful incident(s). The notification shall include whether peer support resources were called to the scene or the personnel involved accepted or declined support.
9. PST Members shall not interfere with the investigation or incident management. PST Members shall confer with the on-scene commander, or primary investigator, prior to meeting with the impacted parties.
10. PST Members will instruct employees involved in peer support activities that they should not make statements of fact that may be related to any criminal or administrative investigation.
11. The purpose of PST contact is not to investigate the facts surrounding a critical incident. The purpose of PST is to try to understand the emotional impact that the critical incident has had on the participants and other impacted persons and to explore ways to lessen that harmful impact. PST Members engaged in peer support interactions with involved impacted employees will stop employees who appear to be making statements of fact that are related to a criminal or administrative investigation.
12. Anytime Mental Health Professionals (MHPs) are asked to meet with a group of departmental employees as a result of a critical incident, PST Members will be present to

facilitate and to learn. If a MHP is working with a person subsequent to a critical incident and if the MHP requests assistance from PST Members, that assistance will be provided. The Peer Support Program will monitor those individuals who have been referred to MHPs as a result of a critical incident. MHPs and the PS Administrator shall work together to determine the best plan to provide effective assistance on a case-by-case basis.

13. The PS Administrator shall maintain a current call-out roster and distribute updated copies containing the PST Members' names, assignments and contact telephone numbers to necessary staff members. These lists are for emergency use only. The strongly preferred method for obtaining the peer support services is to contact a PST Coordinator so that the appropriate resource can be dispatched.
14. Employees shall contact their supervisor, if they believe that they or another person should be referred for peer support services. Except in exigent situations, a response must be authorized by a PST Coordinator.
15. If peer support is requested of a PST Member by anyone other than a PST Coordinator, the PST Member should contact a PST Coordinator for a determination of who should respond. A response which is neither directed nor approved by a PST Coordinator should be a very unusual occurrence and should only happen if the PS Administrator, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chief, or Chief of Police requests it.
16. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled by the PST Coordinator. It will be the responsibility of the participating PST Coordinator, in consultation with Mental Health Staff, to determine the nature of follow-up to be prescribed. An employee may be referred to a MHP by the PS Administrator. Either EAP or other licensed professional resources may be utilized.
17. With the exception of an active emergency response to a critical incident all utilization of personnel for peer support will be with the permission of the Chief of Police, or designee. PST Members are selected for a particular assignment based on their ability, training, experience and suitability for a specific assignment; for that reason, Commanders are encouraged to supply the individual who has been requested, when possible.
18. The PST Member who made the contact or the lead in a group response will give detailed out-briefing to the PST Coordinator after all responses. The PS Administrator will be briefed on all but the most routine responses. Guidance may be sought from a MHP at any time.
19. CISM techniques can be anticipated and employed prior to, during and after an emergency response to major disaster scenes. Commanders who are aware of potentially traumatic major scenes should incorporate pre-exposure and post-exposure care in their critical incident response planning.

C. Peer Support Team (PST) Selection & Training

1. The PST Selection Committee will recommend suitable candidates for PST membership to the Chief of Police.
2. When recommending candidates for PST membership, the PST Selection Committee shall review each candidate's history and will consider any supervisory comments, letters of appreciation or other enclosures that reflect upon the candidate's judgment, maturity, and ability to communicate with people. Specific criteria for consideration will include, but are not limited to the following:

The candidate's:

- a. Basic listening and empathy skills;

- b. Exposure to critical incidents;
 - c. Motivation for becoming a PST Member;
 - d. Standing in the Department;
 - e. Ability to maintain confidentiality;
 - f. Non-judgmental approach to personal behavior, lifestyles and personal problems;
 - g. Ability to recognize common crisis indicators (e.g. depression, suicidality, substance abuse, etc.);
 - h. Willingness and availability to attend training sessions and regularly scheduled meetings; and
 - i. Patrol or equivalent field experience.
3. Any officer who has received any adverse disciplinary action resulting in a suspension of more than three (3) days in duration or in total, within the last twelve (12) months of service, prior to consideration for appointment, excluding motor vehicle collisions involving Department vehicles, shall not be eligible for consideration.
 4. PST Members must be willing to respond to a request, when called out by a PST Coordinator, a commanding officer or other appropriate authority.
 5. PST Members shall complete a course of formal training approved by the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation (ICISF), ICISF-licensed trainers or the State of Georgia Office of Public Safety Support. PST Members shall also attend regular training sessions organized by the CIS Administrator.
 6. Complaints about PST Members will be investigated in accordance with the requirements of CCPD SOP: *E1: Internal Affairs Investigations*.
 7. A PST Member may be removed from the program by the Chief of Police/PS Administrator, upon the recommendation of the PST Coordinator. Examples of conduct warranting removal include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Breach of confidentiality;
 - b. Lack of satisfactory participation;
 - c. Inability to participate;
 - d. Voluntary withdrawal from the program;
 - e. Poor performance at regular duty assignment; and
 - f. Poor performance as a PST Member.

D. Peer Support Team (PST) Conduct

1. The privacy of those who receive peer support must be protected.
2. A PST Member shall not divulge the identity of an employee who requests support, or discuss information obtained while acting in a peer support capacity with anyone else other than the participating PST Members and/or MHP, unless required by law or ordered to do so by the Chief of Police.
3. Disclosure of information shall be required in the following circumstances:
 - a. If the employee authorizes disclosure in writing;

- b. If the information obtained suggests that the employee is a danger to themselves or other persons;
- c. Any employee misconduct that constitutes a violation of state or federal law, or a serious violation of departmental policy is admitted. A PST Member who learns that an employee is engaging in illegal activity shall inform the PS Administrator, who shall inform the Chief of Police; and
- d. In response to a valid subpoena.

E. Record Keeping

1. Notes, records or recordings detailing the information shared in any peer support activity shall not be formally maintained, or kept within personnel files, shift level files, etc.
2. When the PST responds to an incident location or meets with an individual, a request will be submitted to the OPS Commander to generate a supervisory P.E.W.S. alert. The OPS Commander, or designee, will forward the P.E.W.S. alert to the PS Administrator. Statistical reporting information will be maintained as part of the program. However, all information shall be maintained and kept in a manner that will ensure the confidentiality of the employee's identity, so that the privacy of the impacted employee may be protected to the greatest extent possible.
3. The PST Coordinator will provide evaluation forms to persons who participate in peer support activities. Such forms will be submitted anonymously. The PS Administrator will use the evaluations to judge the effectiveness of the CISM Program.

F. Time Keeping & Scheduling

1. The peer support activities of PST Members are work activities and will be reported and compensated just like any other time worked.
2. If a PST Member is called out and the callout causes the member to work overtime, the member will receive compensatory time in accordance with the *Fair Labor & Standards Act*.
3. If a PST Member is needed to respond to an active emergency, the member will make every reasonable effort to respond. The PST Member and the PST Coordinator will keep supervisors and the concerned Division Commander informed.
4. PST Member participation in all preplanned activities must be preapproved. The PST Member is responsible for making proper and timely requests for approval to attend training, conferences, seminars and meetings and for completing any required travel requests.

V. TRAUMA SUPPORT

A. Officer-Involved Shootings

1. The Office of Professional Standards (OPS) oversees officer-involved shooting (OIS) incidents.
2. The OPS will activate peer support activities at the onset of an officer-involved shooting.
3. All officers who are directly involved in the OIS will be placed on paid Administrative Leave for three (3) days and will be scheduled to see the Department's Psychologist.
4. The Psychologist may clear the officer for return to duty or recommend additional support.
5. If support is recommended, OPS will coordinate with the PST to schedule the officer to see a Trauma Support Counselor. Only persons who are culturally competent to law

enforcement trauma through training and or experience will be used. Additionally, the Trauma Support Counselor must be preapproved by the CCPD. Confidentiality of the trauma support will be respected by the CCPD and no confidential information will be shared with the Department without the consent of the patient.

6. Up to four (4) sessions will be paid by the County and the officer will be in paid status while attending. If additional sessions are needed, the officer must use their own insurance coverage.
7. When the Trauma Support Counselor clears the officer for return to duty, the OPS will schedule a second visit with the Department Psychologist for final clearance. Once cleared, the OPS will notify the Chief of Police, who will make the final decision on return to full duty status.
8. Officers who are not cleared for duty after the four (4) Trauma Support visits may be scheduled for fitness for duty evaluation.
9. Until approval for return to full duty status, officers in OIS Trauma Support will be on Light Duty status unless otherwise directed by the Chief of Police.

B. Other Traumatic Incidents

1. In addition to OIS, officers may be involved in traumatic incidents where Trauma Support Counseling may be beneficial.
2. The path for such support is to contact a member of the PST. Any employee, supervisor, or Chaplain who has concerns about themselves or another employee's distress can contact a member of the PST with the facts.
3. Upon receiving notification of an officer involved in a traumatic incident or who is suffering from distress from a previous traumatic incident the PST Member will contact the PS Administrator. A PST Member will contact the employee to advise them of the resources that are available to help them. During this contact and any subsequent contact, the PST Member may see a need to recommend Trauma Counseling.

C. Trauma Support

1. When a PST Member sees that an employee may need Trauma Counseling for a traumatic incident, they will contact the PS Administrator. After evaluating the situation and finding that Trauma Counseling is needed, the PS Administrator will coordinate through the Logistics & Operations Unit to provide the Trauma Counseling Services. The PS Administrator can make recommendations to the Chief of Police for paid Administrative Leave or alternate job assignment consistent with CCPD policy and Civil Service Rules.
2. Up to four (4) sessions will be paid by the County and the employee will be in paid status while attending. If additional sessions are needed, the employee must use their own insurance coverage.
3. When the Trauma Support Counselor clears a sworn employee for return to duty, the PS Administrator will schedule a visit with the Department Psychologist for final clearance. Once cleared, the PS Administrator will notify the Chief of Police who will make the final decision on return to full duty status.
4. Paid Administrative Leave or Light Duty is only available with the approval of the Chief of Police after a recommendation from the PS Administrator.

VI. MAJOR TRAUMATIC INCIDENT DEBRIEFING

A. Incident Occurrence

1. A major traumatic incident is any event where an employee is killed in the line of duty, major disaster with significant number of fatalities, or any other similar incident that is traumatic in nature.
2. Whenever the Department responds to or is involved in a major traumatic incident the Sector/Unit Commander and concerned Major are responsible for notifying the PST.

B. Debriefing

1. All personnel who responded to the traumatic incident will attend the incident debriefing. This is mandatory.
2. The debriefing will be conducted by the PST and all available PST Members are required to attend.
3. The PS Administrator, or designee, will coordinate with the Division Commander, or authorized designee, to schedule the debriefing.
4. Debriefing of a traumatic event should be conducted within twenty-four (24) hours and no later than seventy-two (72) hours following the event.
5. For an officer killed in the line of duty, the debriefing must be held as soon as possible following the funeral service, but no more than two (2) weeks after the funeral. For all other incidents, the debriefing must be held within one (1) week of the incident.
6. Commanders will cooperate to make all involved personnel and PST Members available for the debriefing. Attendance is mandatory and this will be the duty day for all involved personnel.

VII. CANCELLATION

This procedure amends and supersedes the following standard operating procedure: *E10: Peer Support Team*, dated June 30, 2020.